694.g.24.
80

A SERMON PREACH'D at the ASSIZES HELD AT *LAUNCESTON* FOR THE County of *CORNWALL*, On *Thurſday Aug.* 18. 1715. By the Honourable Mr. Juſtice Powis and Mr. Juſtice Eyre.

By *JOHN FURSMAN*, M. A. Rector of *Trevalga*.

EXON:

Printed and ſold by PHILIP BISHOP, in St. *Peter's Church-yard*, 1715.

BRITISH MUSEUM

To the Right Worſhipful

JOSEPH SILLY, Eſq;

High Sheriff of the County of *Cornwall*, And to the Gentlemen of the Grand-Jury.

JOHN MOLESWORTH,
JOHN GREGOR,
WALTER LANGFORD,
HENRY MANATON,
JOHN BORLACE,
JOHN COLE,
SAMUEL FOOT,
THOMAS HERLE,
EDWARD BENNET,
WILLIAM FLAMANKE,
JAMES TREGEARE,
GEORGE ROBINSON,
EDWARD PENROSE,
NICHOLAS OPYE,
JOHN OLIVER,
RICHARD DOIDGE,
ALEXAND MABYN,
JOHN RANDLE,

} Eſqrs.

GENTLEMEN,

IN *Obedience to Your Commands, and under the Protection of Your Names, this Sermon is made publick, tho' I cannot but be very ſenſible it has nothing in it, which cou'd recommend it to your ſo favourable Opinion, but its ſincere Deſign to enforce, at this Juncture, the inviolable Obligation we are under, conſcienciouſly to perform the ſolemn Oaths we have taken to our preſent moſt Gracious* Sovereign, *as* Lawful *and* Rightful King *of this Realm; and firmly to adhere to the* Proteſtant Succeſſion, *as limited, by Law, to* His Royal Houſe. *Of your juſt Senſe of this our indiſpenſable Duty; and your Unanimous Reſolution to Act accordingly; you have given His Majeſty the moſt Loyal, moſt Seaſonable Aſſurances. May this Diſcourſe meet with the ſame ſteddy Principles of Religion and Loyalty in the World!*

and

and then perhaps it may find a like Favourable Reception from it.

HOWEVER, I humbly beg this may by you be accepted, as a publick Acknowledgment of your undeserv'd Favours to me, and of the very great Respect, with which I am,

GENTLEMEN,

Your most Humble,

most Obedient, and

most Obliged Servant,

JOHN FURSMAN

MATTH

MATTH. V. 33, 34.

Ye have heard that it hath been said by them of old time, Thou shalt not forswear thy self, but shalt perform unto the Lord thine Oaths.

But I say unto you, Swear not at all.

THE Design of our Lord, in the Foregoing Part of this Chapter, which introduces his most Divine Sermon on the Mount, is manifestly, from the 18th Ver. to vindicate at once both *Himself* and *the Law*: *Himself* from the Malicious Calumnies fasten'd on Him by the *Scribes* and *Pharisees*, *The Law* from their false Glosses.

THEIR most popular Prejudice against *Him* and His *Doctrine* was, That He meant *to Destroy the Law and the Prophets*. He solemnly assures the People, *He came not to destroy but to fulfil* them: *Verse* 17. His Doctrine wou'd shew them the Necessity of a *Righteousness* far *exceeding* that of those great *Masters of Israel*, the reputed Oracles *Verse* 20.

of

of the Law of God. They, whoſe *Lips* alone were thought to *preſerve Knowledge*, and at whoſe *Mouth* the People had, vainly *ſought* it; themſelves had *made*

Matt. xv. 6. *the Commandments of God of none effect by their Traditions: Teaching for Doctrines*

9. Divine, *the Commandments of Men.*

This He goes on to demonſtrate, in ſome of the moſt important Articles of the Law: clearing the true Senſe of it from their perverſe corrupt Explications; raiſing and improving it to a more ſublime degree of Perfection; *teaching them, not as*

Matt. vii. 29. *the Scribes, but as one having Authority*;

and, by it, meaning alſo to *eſtabliſh*, that of *the Law*, to extend its Influence, and enforce its divine Obligation.

And this (among other Inſtances) He does in the Caſe of *Oaths*, as in the Text,

Ye have heard, that it hath been ſaid by them of old time, Thou ſhalt not forſwear thy ſelf: but ſhalt perform unto the Lord thine Oaths.

But I ſay unto you Swear not at all.

In which laſt Words ſome wou'd have our Lord abſolutely to *forbid all Swearing*, in any Caſe whatſoever. It will therefore be neceſſary (with all poſſible Submiſſion to this Honourable and Learned Audience) in the firſt place, to juſtify the *Lawfulneſs* of *Oaths* upon ſome Occaſions; and to reconcile it with this *Prohibition* of our Saviour; before I proceed to ſpeak more directly to the foregoing Words of the Text.

An *Oath is a moſt ſolemn Appeal to Almighty God for the Truth of what we aſſert or promiſe.* We, expreſly or tacitly call upon Him to be our Witneſs, and withal invoke His Judgments and His Vengeance, if we ſwear untruly. Be the Form of our Oath what it

will

will (as they have been, we know, and are various in different Times and Nations) whether, as of old, among the *Jews*, *God do ſo to me and more alſo. As the Lord liveth, before whom I ſtand. God is my Witneſs, my Judge. I ſwear by the Lord, by Heaven or the Earth. I call God for a Record upon my Soul. So help me God*, or the like. In all theſe Forms, if we ſwear falſly, we imprecate God's Judgments upon us, we *bind our ſelves under a Curſe, the Curſe of God.*

2 *Sam.* 3. 9.
2 *King* 3. 14.
Gen. 31. 50.
Gen. 31. 53.
Judg. 11. 27.
2 *Sam.* 19. 7.
Mat. 5. 34, 35
2 *Cor.* 1. 23.
Act 23. 12.
Prov. 3. 33.

The common Diſtinction of *Oaths*, into *Aſſertory* and *Promiſſory*, is ſo well known, and ſo eaſily underſtood, that it wou'd be impertinent for me to dwell upon it. In the one we declare our Aſſent to ſome Propoſition, or Proteſt againſt it, we Affirm or Deny ſome Matter of Fact paſt or preſent: In the other we Promiſe ſomewhat hereafter to be perform'd.

Now ſurely there can be nothing in all this *morally Evil*: nothing therefore *unlawful* in its ſelf. Moſt certainly, it can be no *Sin*, thus *to call upon God's Holy Name*. On the contrary, 'tis a moſt ſolemn Act of Religion; manifeſtly tends to the divine Glory; is a tacit Acknowledgment of his Omniſcience and Omnipotence; that He is *the God of Truth*; and the ſure Avenger of the injur'd Perſon on all ſuch as ſhall dare thus preſumptuouſly to ſin againſt it.

If we conſider the *End*, the *Deſign* of an *Oath*; that is no other than to give the ſtrongeſt Confirmation to ſome doubtful Matter, which Human Affairs will admit of; a deciſive Determination of all Controverſies,

verſies; in the Apoſtle's Words, *The End of Strife:* An End, moſt agreeable to Human Reaſon, moſt acceptable to that God, who *is not the God of Confuſion, but of Peace.*

Heb. 6. 16.

2 Cor. 14. 33.

The *Uſe*, the abſolute *Neceſſity* of *Oaths*, in ſome Caſes, to the very ſupport of Human Society and Civil Government, is as manifeſt: withdraw the one, and the other cannot ſtand. 'Tis that which is the main Foundation of all mutual Truſt and Confidence among Men; the ſtrongeſt Tye, the ſureſt Obligation upon their Conſciences. *If a Man ſwear an Oath*, ſays the great *Jewiſh* Lawgiver, *he binds his ſoul with a bond:* and that, or nothing elſe with hold him. The Sin of *Perjury* will ſtrike Terror, where all other Reſtraints prove only *Cords of Vanity*; they ſoon *break* thoſe *Bonds aſunder* and *caſt away* thoſe *Cords from them.* The Man who will not ſtick at a *Lye* to ſerve his Ends, when call'd to confirm that Falſhood by his *Oath*, will (if not entirely loſt to all Senſe of God and Religion) find himſelf at a ſtand: his Heart will miſgive him at the ſhocking Thought, and he will hardly avoid asking himſelf the Queſtion, at leaſt, *How can I do this great wickedneſs, and ſin againſt God?*

Numb. 30. 2.

'Tis ſadly true indeed, from daily Experience, that all this Caution proves too little; ineffectual to guard againſt Fraud and Falſhood: for *the Heart* of Man *is deceitful above all things, and deſperately Wicked.* Profligate Men, who neither *regard God* nor *Man*, break thro' Oaths *as the horſe ruſheth into the battle*; with a fearleſs, heady, harden'd Preſumption. But *Human Laws* can do no more. *There is one Lawgiver, who* alone *is able to ſave and to deſtroy*: To *Him* the Appeal is made: at *His* ſupreme

Jer. 17. 9.

Jam. 4. 12.

preme Tribunal muſt theſe Giants in impiety ſtand
fall. *The Judge of all the Earth*, who
one can *judge the Secrets of Men*, muſt, *Gen.* 18. 25. *Rom.* 2. 16.
this Caſe, (as he will moſt aſſuredly in
) *do Right*; both vindicate *His own divine Honour*,
nd the Juſtice of *Human Laws*.

CIVIL Government therefore being *the Ordinan foce*
d; and ſuch a ſolemn Invocation of *Rom.* 3. 2.
is ſacred Name, being, in ſome Caſes,
bſolutely neceſſary to the very Being of it; for any
ing that appears to *Human Reaſon*, it muſt be as
wful, as 'tis *neceſſary* to the Subſiſtence of the Laws
hemſelves.

AND accordingly we find it to have been the common
enſe and Univerſal Practice of all Nations, from the
ry firſt Records of Time. *Dionyſius Halicarnaſſenſis*
lls it πελάτια πίστις, *the laſt Reſort of Faith among*
en: which in no Age cou'd grow abſolete; but wou'd
aintain its Authority and its Uſe, among Greeks *and*
arbarians, to the End of Time. Diodorus Siculus
ὁρκου πίστις; and *the very Foundation of Human Society.*
nd, to the ſame effect, the *Roman Orator, Arctiſ-*
imum Vinculum inter Majores noſtros.

THUS far then the *Law* of *Nature* and *Nations*
ads us.

AND, if we conſult the *Holy Scriptures*, we ſhall
en find the Solemnity of an *Oath*, upon many weigh-
y Occaſions, to give ſtrength to private Covenants
nd Agreements between Man and Man; to make
ith in judicial Proceedings, *&c.* to have been in
mmon Uſe among God's own People, from the moſt
arly Times, and that, between the very beſt of Men,
ho muſt be preſum'd to have had the greateſt, the
oſt deſerv'd Confidence in each others Juſtice and Fi-

delity: not only conniv'd at or approv'd, but expreſly *commanded* by that very Law, which was its ſelf of divine Inſtitution; *Commanded*, as the only neceſſary Expedient to aſcertain doubtful Facts; to prevent all poſſible Suſpicion and Jealouſly; *Commanded*, as a moſt Religious Act, a Juſt Acknowledgment of the one only true God, of His Omniſcience, His infinite Power and unerring Juſtice: *Thou ſhalt fear the Lord thy God and ſerve him; and ſhalt ſwear by his name.* Deut. 6. 13.

But what is a yet further unanſwerable Argument, that an *Oath* is not in its ſelf *morally evil*, nor therefore abſolutely forbidden us by God, is, that the very God, *the God of Truth, who is the ſame yeſterday, to day and for ever*, with whom is *no Variableneſs neither ſhadow of turning*, in His infinite Condeſcenſion to this moſt Religious Univerſal Practice of Men, was pleas'd to ratify His own divine Promiſes to us expreſly by an *Oath*. *By my ſelf have I ſworn ſaith the Lord, for becauſe thou haſt done this thing, in bleſſing I will bleſs thee, and in thy ſeed ſhall all the Nations of the Earth be bleſs'd; becauſe thou haſt obey'd my voice.* Gen. 22. 16, 17, 18. Upon which the Author to the *Hebrews* makes this Remark, *When God made promiſe to Abraham, becauſe he cou'd ſwear by no greater, he ſwore by himſelf; willing herein more abundantly to ſhew unto the Heirs of promiſe the immutability of his counſel, he confirm'd it by an Oath: that by two immutable things, wherein it was impoſſible for God to Lye, we might have a ſtrong Conſolation.* Heb. 6. 13, 17, 18.

And all this is manifeſtly imply'd in the very Words of the Text, *Ye have heard that it hath been ſaid by them of old time, thou ſhalt not forſwear thy ſelf; but ſhalt perform unto the Lord thine oath.* Which ſup-

poſe

poſes that they might *lawfully ſwear*; ſo they did it with a Religious Regard to the neceſſary Caution giv'n 'em by the Prophet, *in truth, in judgment, and in righteouſneſs.* Jer. 4. 2.

In this, as in all other Inſtances, ſo far as it was conſiſtent with the Glory of God and the good of Mankind, Chriſt meant not to *make void the Law*, as I before hinted; but to improve and to eſtabliſh it. And accordingly will the *Lawfulneſs* of Oaths, as here limited and aſſerted, be eaſily reconcil'd with the following *Prohibition* of our Saviour's, *But I ſay unto you ſwear not at all.*

Now, as there is nothing in an *Oath*, as ſuch, *morally evil*, nothing but what, under proper Limitations, manifeſtly tends to the divine Glory, and to the Peace and Security of Human Society; this muſt certainly be allow'd to be a ſtrong Preſumption in *Reaſon*, that our Lord cou'd not intend *entirely* to *forbid* it. Let us therefore conſider the Words themſelves. 'Twas His declar'd Intention, as I before obſerv'd, to vindicate the Law from the falſe Gloſſes of the *Scribes* and *Phariſees*; to improve and perfect it. To this End he points out to the People the great Precepts of that Law, *Thou ſhalt not kill*; *Thou ſhalt not commit Adultery*; *Thou ſhalt not Forſwear thy ſelf*, &c. not diſannulling it in theſe Articles; but giving it His further divine Sanction, in this His expreſs Recognition. *The Law* was good, but as reſtrain'd by the *Phariſees*, to *actual Murder* only, to *Adultery in the very Fact*, to *direct Perjury*, &c. was groſly perverted, was *uſed unlawfully*. But, ſays he, I call you; *the Law its ſelf*, in its primitive uncorrupted ſenſe, calls you to a more exalted pitch of Virtue: Something more is *Requir'd* to *fulfil the Law*, *I ſay unto you ſwear not at all*; not but in

Caſes

Caſes of great Moment and Importance; *not* on ſlight and trivial Occaſions; *not*, in common Converſation. This was then too familiar among the *Jews*; and their *blind Guides* had miſled 'em into an Opinion, they might do it *lawfully*; ſo they ſwore only *by Heaven*, or *the Earth*, *the Temple*, &c. not expreſly invoking the Name of God.

That our Saviour's Words are to be underſtood with *this Limitation*, is evident from the whole Series of His Diſcourſe, from the Practice of the *Apoſtles* and *Primitive Chriſtians*, and ev'n of *our Lord himſelf*, approving the *Uſe* of *Oaths* (tho' only indeed on ſolemn Occaſions) by their own Examples, and acknowledging the *Lawfulneſs* of their *Impoſition*.

But here I muſt not dwell, being now to ſpeak to what is more directly pointed at in the former part of the Text-

The *Obligation* of *Oaths* and

The *Enormous Impiety* of *Swearing falſly*.

Thou ſhalt not Forſwear thy ſelf, but ſhalt perform unto the Lord thine Oaths.

As to the *Firſt*, the *Obligation* of *Oaths*, nothing ſurely can be more *ſolemn* and *ſacred*. *Thou ſhalt perform, unto the Lord, thine Oaths*, ſays our Saviour; implying, that in *all Oaths*, whether *Aſſertory or Promiſſory*, the firſt ſuperiour Obligation is to God himſelf. Him we invoke as a Witneſs to the Truth of what we affirm, deny or promiſe: His tremendous Judgments we imprecate upon our ſelves, if we *ſwear falſly*. Ἀποδώσεις, *Thou ſhalt pay*; intimating, that every *Oath* is a *Debt* upon a Man's Soul, which he muſt anſwer at his Peril; he muſt *Pay the utmoſt Farthing*. What St. *Peter* charg'd upon *Ananias*, is more ſtrongly applicable to every *perjur'd* Perſon, *Thou haſt not lyed unto*

nto *Men, but unto God. Thou haſt lyed* Act. 5. 4.
pon *Oath*; and 'tis *the Oath of God* (as Eccl. 8. 2.
is call'd in Scripture) which *thou* haſt *falſify'd*, as well as Faith with Men.

And accordingly *this*, of all others, hath ever been uſtly eſteem'd the moſt *inviolable Obligation*, by all Men of Probity and Virtue, in all Ages; and, as uch, moſt religiouſly perform'd. Tho' they had *ſworn to their own hurt; they chang'd* Pſal. 15. 5.
ot. *Joſhua* and the *Princes of Iſrael*, unwarily beguiled, as they had been, into a Joſh. 9, 3, &c.
Treaty and Covenant with the *Gibeonites*, vou'd not however entertain a Thought of breaking , *becauſe of the Oath which they had ſworn* Verſe 20.
nto them. *We have ſworn unto them by the* 19.
Lord God of Iſrael, therefore we may not ouch them. *David* wou'd ſuffer no Conderation to move him to violate *the Lord's* 2 Sam. 21. 7.
Oath, which had been between him and Jonathan; *but ſpar'd his Son*, when otherwiſe both *King* nd *People* might have been tempted to think it *expeient, that Son ſhou'd die.* Even impious Matt. 14. 9.
Herod affected at leaſt a ſolemn Regard to . And the Author of *Eccleſiaſtes* ſpeaks of the *Righteous* and the *Wicked* under the oppoſite Characters of *him that ſweareth, and him* Eccl. 9. 2.
hat feareth an Oath.

And ſurely the Man, that Fears not to be guilty f deliberate *Perjury*, can have *no Fear of God efore his Eyes. Will a Man rob God?* ſays he Prophet. *He* evidently does ſo, who *per-*
orms not unto the Lord his Oaths. Will he Mal. 3. 8.
hus *lye* to the *God of Truth?* Dares he to challenge his Omnipotence, and to defie his Vengeance?

This

This the harden'd Mortal, who *forſwears himſelf*, profanely does. He has ſolemnly imprecated upon his own Soul the Judgments of that God, who hath ſaid, *Vengeance is mine, I will repay it.* He calls *down Fire from Heaven* upon himſelf to *conſume* him, and with an horrible preſumption, ſtands, unmoved, the darted Vengeance, the fiery Indignation of the incens'd *Almighty*; *till His Terrors ſet themſelves in array againſt him*; *till his Arrows* ſtrike deep into his Soul; *till the Poiſon thereof drinketh up his Spirit.*

Deut. 32. 35. Rom. 12. 19.

Job 6. 4.

As the moſt inſolent Affront therefore to the Divine Majeſty, the moſt avow'd Contempt of his Attributes, as well as the moſt pernicious Inſtrument of unrighteouſneſs among Men; as a Sin of the deepeſt dye; the moſt execrable, and, withal, inexpiable Crime, has *Perjury* been ever condemn'd and puniſh'd by the *Laws of Nations.*

The Law of *Moſes* provided that *if a falſe Witneſs roſe up againſt any Man, to teſtify againſt him that which was wrong, the Judges ſhou'd* make diligent Inquiſition; and if he was convicted, *they ſhou'd do unto him*, ev'n, *as he had thought to have done unto his Brother: They ſhou'd not pity him; but he ſhou'd anſwer eye for eye and life for life.* And the heinouſneſs of this Crime cannot be more effectually aggravated, than by the terrible Judgment denounc'd againſt it by the *Prophet*, *A curſe ſhall enter into the Houſe of him that ſweareth falſly by the Name of God: it ſhall remain in the midſt of it and conſume it, with the very timber and the ſtones thereof.*

Deut. 19. 16, &c.

Zech. 5. 4.

The *Heathens* themſelves thought it to be a Crime of ſo horrid a Nature, as to entail the ſevereſt Judgments

ments, assur'd Misery and Ruin upon late Posterity. Among the *Egyptians* it was capital. The Penalty inflicted by the *Roman* Laws upon *Perjury*, *Subornation*, *Forgery* and *Bribery*, was no less than *Confiscation* and *Banishment*; and (when the Person was of a servile Condition) *Death* it self. Nothing can be more solemn, or more applicable to my present Purpose, than the following Sanction of those Laws. *Sin forte nos effugerit, pervigilem tamen illum atque insomnem Oculum, cui nihil, quàm occultum sit, non patet, effugere non poterit*, &c. *Let the perjur'd Person know, tho' he may perhaps be secure from the Cognizance and Censure of the Law, from the all seeing Eye of God he cannot. Since we can no otherwise reach him, we think ourselves oblig'd to load him with the heaviest Curses and Imprecations. Let the avenging Hand of God be upon him in all his Ways! Let all the Powers of Heav'n rise up in Judgment against him, and condemn him! Let his Thread of Life be cut short! Let Everlasting Misfortunes attend him! Let the consuming Fire lay the very Foundations of his Habitation in Ashes, and let his Posterity beg their Bread.*

Diod Sicul. l. 1. c. 77. *D.* 48. 10. 1, 4.

And this the *Heathens* thought no Sacrifice, no Offering cou'd ever expiate *Dira Detestatio nullâ expiatur Victimâ: ——Piacula nulla resolvent!*

When and in *what Cases* a Man may incur *this heavy guilt*, is what I should now shew.

Whoever therefore Affirms or Denies any thing, upon Oath, contrary to his *certain Knowledge*, or swears to an *Uncertainty*, is evidently *perjur'd*. In the one Case he calls God to Witness a *Certain Falshood*: In the other, to attest, as *certain*, a Fact to himself *Doubtful*, and which may therefore be as well *False* as

 True.

True. As an *Oath* is the laſt Degree of Aſſurance Men can give each other of the Truth of any Fact; nothing ſhort of the higheſt Degree of *Certainty* can poſſibly juſtify it.

WHOEVER ſwears to do what is *Morally Evil*; or *Unlawful*, by reaſon of ſome Prior Engagement: Whoever *promiſes* upon Oath what he *means not* punctually *to perform*; or *performs not* what he *promiſed*, tho' with a ſincere Intention, if in his Power ſo to do, *forſwears himſelf.*

WHEN there is any *Equivocation* or *Mental Reſervation* in Men's Oaths; when they have a reſerved Senſe to themſelves, contrary to, or different from the natural common ſenſe of the Words: When, after they have ſworn, they have recourſe to *forc'd Conſtructions*, to little *Artifices* and *Evaſions*, to elude the Force of their Oaths, *God will not hold them guiltleſs*; not the leſs Guilty for their Craft and Subtlety. Their boaſted Skill in Ways and Means to enervate the moſt ſolemn, ſacred Obligation; to defeat its declar'd Intention, without breaking in upon the Letter of it; will be ſo far from acquitting 'em, that it muſt rather aggravate their *Perjury* and *Perfidiouſneſs*. They may pervert an *Oath*, pervert the *Law*; but cannot evade the *Judgment of God*: *His* Law has no *Salvo* for Deceit and Guile.

BUT *Satan*, we know, was *transform'd into an Angel of Light*; and *He*, who was *a Liar from the Beginning*, has taught his Children ſo many wicked Arts, as fully to inſtruct 'em in the *Myſtery of Unrighteouſneſs*, without any ſenſe of *Sin* or *Shame*, at the committing it. Hath God ſaid, *Thou ſhalt ſwear the Lord liveth, in Truth, in Judgment, and in Righteouſneſs*

2 Cor. 11. 14.

Joh. 8. 44.

Jer. 4. 2.

ouſneſs? Hath our Lord ſaid, *Thou ſhalt not forſwear thy ſelf; but ſhalt perform unto the Lord thine Oaths?* But ſays the *Jeſuit*, (and they have ſaid it, and acted accordingly, at our own Tribunals, in a former Reign) If I am call'd before *an incompetent Judge*, have to do with *an Heretick*, or upon other *Reaſonable Cauſes* of concealing the Truth (of which He Himſelf is to be the *ſole Judge*) I may lawfully elude the Queſtions that ſhall be put to me by *Equivocal* Anſwers, Words which may, and, I know, will be underſtood in a quite contrary Senſe to that wherein I ſpeak 'em: I may, without Sin, in expreſs Words, affirm that upon Oath, which by a mental Reſervation, I mean to deny, and know to be falſe; ſo that what I reſerve within my ſelf, added to the Words I ſpeak, can, in any ſenſe, tho' never ſo foreign to the purpoſe, be reconcil'd to Truth. And thus, if he is ask'd, Whether he's Privy to ſuch or ſuch a Deſign? He ſhall readily ſwear, *That he knows nothing of the Matter*, ——Meaning within himſelf, *That he knows nothing of it, but what he is reſolved to conceal:* And, after this moſt abominable *Perjury*, he ſhall *wipe his Mouth, and ſay, I have done no evil*; and, as with the Confidence of an *Apoſtle*, affirm, *I ſpeak the truth; I lye not.* Thus are Men taught in the Church of *Rome*, not only to be falſe; but alſo falſe upon a Principle; to *prevaricate* and *forſwear themſelves*, for *Conſcience* ſake; and with an impious Pretence to *Truth*, to cover and ſanctify the worſt and moſt pernicious *Falſhoods*. To the infinite Scandal ſurely of the *Chriſtian Religion*, are ſuch vile Principles advanced and maintain'd, by thoſe who profeſs to lead Mens Conſciences into the *Simplicity which is in Chriſt*: Principles, which even an honeſt *Heathen* wou'd bluſh to

own: And they themſelves indeed are ſo conſcious of their direct Tendency to the utter ſubverſion of all Publick Juſtice and Judgment, as not to allow 'em but in particular Caſes (tho' manifeſtly in Reaſon to be allow'd in all or none; for the Reaſon of the Thing is in the main the ſame) as if they thought it to be their Privilege to *ſpeak wickedly for God*, as they pretend; and they had a Licenſe to *talk deceitfully for him*.

Job 13. 7.

And ſo indeed they have, if, we will believe another, as avow'd, Doctrine of the Church of *Rome*, That *the Pope* has, in himſelf, an abſolute Power to *Diſpenſe* with all the moſt ſacred *Oaths* and *Vows* at pleaſure; to *Diſannul* the moſt ſolemn *Leagues* and *Treaties* between *Princes*; and to *Abſolve Subjects* from their *Allegiance* to their *Sovereign*: A Power which 'tis well known he has in Fact often exercis'd to the Reproach of all Religion; and the enſlaving too great a part of the Chriſtian World. The *Jeſuits*, as they are reſolv'd never to give up ſo important a Branch of the *Papal* Power and Prerogative, labour hard to palliate ſo groſs an Impoſition upon the Reaſon and the Conſciences of Men; but in vain. For notwithſtanding all their Artifices, What is this, but literally to *exalt the Pope* to an Equality with *God*? while he arrogates to himſelf an Authority to cancel an Obligation, wherein we ſtand expreſly engag'd to God Himſelf, as well as Man; and from which God alone therefore can poſſibly Set us free, *To the Lord are we to perform our Oaths*.

2 Theſſ. 2. 4.

And here we cannot ſurely but obſerve, what Faith and Confidence is to be repos'd in Men of ſuch profligate Principles; Men whoſe *Church* has taught 'em, that

that *No Faith is to be kept with Hereticks*: and who accordingly make little or no Conſcience of breaking it, whenever their *Suprema Lex*, their own dear *Intereſts* tempts 'em ſo to do. 'Tis manifeſt, no caution is, or can be ſufficient to guard effectually againſt their pernicious Arts of Deceiving. No *Oath* can be fram'd ſo ſtrict and explicite, but they will eaſily elude the Force of it. They are to *judge for themſelves*, and their *reaſonable Cauſe* will never be wanting. To uſe the Words of the Son of *Sirach* in another Caſe, this *is an exquiſite Subtilty*; *but the ſame is unjuſt.* *Eccl.* 19. 25.

THIS alſo will ſhew us, if Experience has not more ſurely done it, upon how unequal Terms we treat with *Princes* of their Communion: how little Security we can poſſibly have in their moſt ſolemn *Engagements*, *Renunciations*, &c. under the Influence of an Order of Men, whoſe Intereſt and Intrigues in all the Courts of *Europe*, which pay Obedience to the See of *Rome*, are too well known and felt. The *Spirit* and the *Letter* of a *Treaty* or an *Oath* is *their* peculiar belov'd *Diſtinction*, of which they will never want the *Uſe* and *Application*; if the Difficulty be not thus more eaſily ſolved, *For ſuch is our Pleaſure.* Tho' it ſhou'd be expreſly ſtipulated, *Not to ſeek or ev'n to accept of any Diſpenſation from that Engagement*, let *the Pope* but *diſpenſe* with *this very Stipulation*, (and who ſhall hinder him from doing it at pleaſure) and according to their Principles, what Security is given by the pretended Obligation?

AND it is poſſible, *(for there is nothing New under the Sun)* for an intriguing, treacherous Enemy, *through his* ungodly *Policy*, thus *to make Craft to proſper in his Hand: and*, ev'n, *by Peace to deſtroy many.* The Prophet,

Prophet, (*Dan.* 8. 25.) particularly points at a *Mighty Monarch*, in whom all this shou'd be literally accompliſh'd. And it requires more Skill, in the Interpretation of Prophecies, than I can allow my ſelf to pretend to in any meaſure, to ſay that this wily Character, in exact Juſtice, can agree to no *other Prince* but *Antiochus*.

I have now only to apply what has been ſaid to the preſent Solemnity; and ſhall conclude.

And here I am, in the firſt place, to addreſs my ſelf, in all Humility to all *Magiſtrates* and Men in Authority: recommending to your moſt ſerious Conſideration, how far you are in *Law* and *Conſcience*, oblig'd, *for the preventing and puniſhing of Vice, Prophaneneſs, and Immmorality, and the Encouragement of true Piety and Virtue*, to put thoſe very good *Laws* more effectually in *Execution*, which the Wiſdom of the Nation hath provided, *for the ſuppreſſing of Blaſphemy, Prophane Curſing and Swearing*; which to the great Diſhonour of God's Holy Name, of our Religion and Government, are ſo common in our Streets, and cannot but threaten us with the ſevereſt Vengance. As with the *Jews* of old, *we* may be under very juſt Apprehenſions, that *God hath a Controverſy with the Inhabitants of* this *Land; for that by Swearing, and Lying, and Killing, and Stealing, they daily break out; becauſe that there is little Truth, or Mercy, or Knowledge of God in the Land.* Hoſ. 4. 1, 2. In this degenerate Age ſurely, if ever, are *we* of the *Clergy* under the laſt Neceſſity of imploring the Aſſiſtance of the *Civil Power*. The *Law* muſt interpoſe, and *Sentence againſt an Evil Work be executed ſpeedily*; or *the Hearts of the Sons of Men will be fully ſet in them to do evil*. Even a St. *Paul* himſelf, tho' he were

to *ſpeak with the Tongues of Men and of Angels*, might *Reaſon*, to the Men of this Generation, of *Righteouſneſs, Temperance and Judgment to come*, with leſs Succeſs than to an Heathen *Felix*. The Thought of being *in Danger of the* preſent *Judgment*, *in Danger of the Council*, has often the good Fortune to ſhock ev'n thoſe hardy Men, who notwithſtanding all that the *Son of God* himſelf has ſaid, can deſpiſe, or ſtand unmov'd at the *Danger of Hell Fire*. Acts 24. 25. Matt. 5. 22.

UNMOV'D and inſenſible muſt *they* be of the *Sacred Obligation* of *Oaths*, and the *monſtrous Impiety* of *Swearing Falſly*, as I have here, I hope, truly ſtated it, who, when call'd to give *Evidence*, in *judicial Proceedings*, in Defiance to the Laws of God and Man, *falſify* that *Evidence* by *direct Perjury* or more *artful Equivocation*; who dare call God himſelf to Witneſs a *known Falſhood* or *doubtful Truth*. *They* uſe the Law as unlawfully as the tremendous Name of God: pervert that which ſhou'd be *the End of all Strife*, the very laſt Security of Civil Juſtice, to the Deſtruction of all Faith and Juſtice among Men; to their own aſſur'd final Deſtruction. *Their Damnation ſlumbereth not*.

EQUALLY, if not more criminally, involv'd are *they* in this heavy Guilt, to whom, as under our Conſtitution, the *Cogniſance* of the *Fact* is committed, upon which the *Law* is to pronounce its *Sentence*; when *brib'd*, with that, which is indeed too powerful *to blind the Eyes of the Wiſe, and pervert the Words of the Righteous*, inſtead of Trying that Fact *Well and Truly*, *according to their Evidence* and their *Oath*, they make a Falſe Report of it; baſely Proſtitu- Deut. 16. 9.

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ting, for *filthy Lucre* and ungodly Gain, both their *Conſciences* and the *Law* to the higheſt Bidder. *This is a ſore Evil*; when that, which was at firſt moſt wiſely deſign'd, for the ſureſt Guard to Right and Juſt, that every Man ſhou'd be adjudg'd *per Pares, by his own Brethren*, becomes his Remedileſs Grievvance, an Inlet to Unrighteouſneſs.

AND here I ſhou'd think my ſelf Wanting to the Duty I owe to *God*, to our *King* and *Country*, ſhou'd I not with greater Earneſtneſs preſs you all, in your ſeveral Stations, to a conſciencious Diſcharge of your *Oaths* to our preſent moſt gracious Soveraign Lord KING *GEORGE*. Inexcuſably wanting in that Duty, ſhou'd I be, at *this time*, when ſuch *Art* and *Induſtry* is uſed by *deſigning perfidious Men*, to *alienate* our *Affections* from *Him*; when *His Royal Perſon* and *Government* are *miſrepreſented*, *libell'd*, and *traduc'd*, with an unexampled *Impudence* and *Scurrility*, *His Supreme Authority* and *the Juſtice of the Nation* inſulted by *Riats* and *treacherous Tumults*, fomented among us: When a PRETENDER to *his Crown* and *Dignity*, encouraged by theſe *Rebellious* Practices, finds his *Hopes* reviv'd: (What *Aſſurances* have been given him, and by *whom*, Time, we hope, will more fully diſcover: But *Reviv'd* his *Hopes* manifeſtly are, of ſeeing his diſcarded Intereſt and Pretenſions now ſupported here) when we are actually threaten'd with an *Invaſion* from Abroad, concerted in his Favour: laſtly, when (without Breach of Charity I may ſay it) we ſee too plain Indications daily, "That Religion and the Fear of "God are ſo far Extinct among us, That "too many are willing to keep their "Oaths, ſo far as they think Convenient, and no fur-

N. Machiavel Hiſt. Florent. l. 3.

"ther;

" ther; That they Swear, not in order to perform;
" but by this Means, to find Credit to deceive; and
" pleaſe themſelves with having acted their Part well,
" when they have eluded and ſet aſide their Oaths,
" with moſt eaſe and ſafety."

THIS being the Caſe, I *counſel*, I *adjure* you to keep the *KING's Commandments, and that in regard of the Oath of God.* We have, as *truly and ſincerely, acknowledg'd, profeſs'd, teſtify'd and declar'd, as in our Conſcience, before God and the World, That our Sovereign Lord* GEORGE *is Lawful and Rightful King of this Realm.* We have, as *Solemnly and Sincerely, declar'd, That we believe in our Conſcience, That the Perſon pretended to be* PRINCE *of* WALES, *during the Life of the late King* James, *and, ſince his Deceaſe, pretending to be, and taking upon himſelf the Stile and Title of* KING *of* ENGLAND, *by the Name of* JAMES *the Third, hath not any Right or Title whatſoever to the Crown of this Realm.* We have *ſworn, That we will bear Faith and True Allegiance to his Majeſty* KING GEORGE, *and* HIM *will defend, to the utmoſt of our Power, againſt all Traiterous Conſpiracies and Attempts whatſoever, which ſhall be made againſt his Perſon, Crown and Dignity. And that we will do our utmoſt to endeavour to diſcloſe, and make known to his Majeſty and his Succeſſors, all Treaſons and Traiterous Conſpiracies, which we ſhall know to be againſt him or any of them. And we have faithfully promis'd, to the utmoſt of our Power, to ſupport, maintain and defend the Succeſſion of the Crown, againſt him the ſaid* James, *and all other Perſons whatſoever; as the ſame is and ſtands limited,* by Law, *to the Princeſs* SOPHIA, *and the Heirs of of* HER *Body, being Proteſtants. And all theſe things* we have, as *plainly and ſincerely, acknowledg'd and ſworn*

 according

according to these expreſs Words, by us ſpoken; and according to the plain and common Senſe and Underſtanding of the ſame Words; without any Equivocation, Mental Evaſion, or Secret Reſervation whatſoever. Laſtly, *We have made this Recognition, Acknowledgment, Abjuration, Renunciation and Promiſe,* as *heartily, willingly and truly, upon the true Faith of a Chriſtian.*

THIS *Oath, Lawfully impos'd,* we have as *Lawfully taken.* Let us not *Forſwear ourſelves*; but faithfully *perform our Oaths unto the Lord,* by an affectionate Loyal Obedience to our *Lawful* and *Rightful Sovereign.*

OATHS *of Allegiance and Fidelity* to *the Supreme Powers,* have, of all others, been ever eſteem'd the moſt juſtifiable and neceſſary: the Peace and Proſperity of all Civil Government, manifeſtly depending upon this ſo ſolemn a National Obligation. We have Inſtances of it in the *Holy Scriptures.* And 'tis Remarkable, that the *Eſſenes,* a very ſtrict *Sect* among the *Jews,* who were the moſt Scrupulous in the Matter of *Oaths,* freely *ſwore* to *obey their Magiſtrates.*

2 Kings 11.4. *Eccl.* 8. 2.

OUR *Good King,* on his Part, has ſolemnly *Sworn,* at his Coronation, " To the utmoſt of his Power, to " maintain our moſt holy Religion, as eſtabliſh'd by " Law; to preſerve to the Biſhops and Clergy of this " Realm, and to the Churches committed to their " Charge, all ſuch Rights and Privileges as, by Law, " do, or ſhall appertain to them or any of them; to " govern his People by the Statutes, Laws, and Cu- " ſtoms of the Realm; to cauſe Law and Juſtice, in " Mercy, to be adminiſtred to all his Subjects." He has been graciouſly pleas'd to give us, on all Occaſions, the ſtrongeſt, repeated Aſſurances, that he will " Pro-

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" tect and Encourage the Church of " *England*, as by Law eſtabliſh'd: that " the Preſervation of our excellent Con- " ſtitution, the Eaſe, Peace and Happi- " neſs of his People are, and ſhall be " his chief Care: And that *he will* religiouſly perform, " and make good to us, all the Engagements he is un- " der." He has in no one Inſtance departed or deviated from this *his* declar'd inviolable Rule of *his* Government. *He* neither wants, nor acknowledges any *Diſpenſing Power* to *Abſolve him* from it. *His Religion* and *his Intereſt* are manifeſtly the ſame with ours. The *Proteſtant Intereſt* throughout the World muſt in all Human Probability, Stand or Fall with *him*. *That Intereſt*, which, through the known Artifices of the Church of *Rome*, and the too ſure Advantage given 'em by our fatal *Diviſions*, has, of late Years, been in a viſibly declining State. To that *he* has ever firmly adher'd: and we may now juſtly hope will find it in *his* Power more effectually to ſupport and maintain it; together with *his own juſt and undoubted Right* *His Wiſdom* and *Valour* have been confeſs'd by all *Europe*. *His* Royal *Clemency* and *Goodneſs* hath been experienc'd, and is gratefully acknowledged by *his* own Native Subjects. To *us he came*, *not with a Rod*, but *with* a Paternal *Love*, *and in the Spirit of Meekneſs*: and nothing, but our unaccountable Folly and Madneſs, can deprive us of the more Benign Influence of his mild and peaceful Adminiſtration.

His Speeches to his Parliament, and Anſwers to their and other Addreſſes.

SHOU'D the Deſigns of the *Pretender* and his Adherents ſucceed, which God, in Mercy to us all, prevent, the *Pope*, in the *Plenitude of his Power*, will eaſily, gladly *Diſpenſe* with any the moſt ſolemn *Oaths*, which *Reaſon of State* may oblige that *Pretender* to take

take at his coming: and *he*, in *his abundant Grace*, will, as freely, *Diſpenſe* with *our Laws*, *Eccleſiaſtical* and *Civil*. *This*, moſt certainly, *will be the manner of the King*, whom theſe deluded, infatuated Men wou'd have to *Reign over us: And what will ye do in the End thereof? This* is the ſure Conſequence of a *Popiſh Government* and *Arbitrary Power*. *We* have actually *ſeen* it; or our *Fathers* have *told* us: tho' too many ſeem to have *Forgotten*, or *will not Remember* that *Evil Day*; *the Day*, when nothing, but a very *ſignal Providence*, cou'd have *deliver'd us* out of the Hand of *the Enemy*.

MAY the ſame *Good Providence*, *that only* can, *deliver us* alſo *from ourſelves*; our inteſtine, unnatural, endleſs *Diviſions! Is Chriſt divided?* Is the *Publick good divided?* *Be thou inſtructed, O Jeruſalem, leſt my Soul depart from thee; leſt I make thee deſolate; a Land not inhabited*, was the Compaſſionate Menace of God to the *Jews* of old. This was *written for our Learning*. Let *us be inſtructed, leſt his Soul depart from us* alſo; leſt, given up by Him to *ſtrong Deluſion*, perſiſting in our monſtrous Ingratitude both to *God* and our *King*, perſiſting to *Bite and Devour one another*, we be, at laſt, *conſum'd*, as were the *Jews*, *one of another O Iſrael, Thou haſt deſtroy'd thy ſelf*.

1 *Cor.* 1. 11, &c.

Jer. 6. 8.

Hoſ. 13. 9.

As we wou'd not become the moſt *Execrable People*, a *People devoted* to like *Deſtruction*, let us *perform unto the Lord our Oaths*. Let the *Pope* pretend to *Diſpenſe*: Let the *Jeſuit Swear Equivocally*: *We have not ſo learn'd Chriſt*. *We* cannot, *we* expect not to be *hereby juſtify'd*; *but he that judgeth us is the Lord*. To *Him* we have *Sworn*: *His Diſpenſation*

Eph. 4. 20.

tion we can never obtain for *Swearing Falſly*. *His Soul* wou'd ſurely *be aveng'd on ſuch a Nation as this*; *an Aſſembly of Treacherous Men*, who ſhou'd thus *Blaſpheme* at once both *God* and their *King*: and *He* wou'd *be juſtify'd*, wou'd *be clear* in *this* his ſevereſt *Judgment*.

PARDON the Freedom with which I ſpeak: for when our moſt holy *Religion*, when our *Civil Rights* and *Liberties*, when *all* that can be valuable to us, as *Chriſtians* and *Engliſhmen* is in ſuch *imminent Danger*; 'tis, if ever, pardonable, '*tis good to be zealouſly affected in* ſo *good* a *Cauſe*. Gal. 4. 18. I dare not *ſpeak wickedly for God*, much leſs for *Men*, nor will I *talk Deceitfully*, through Fear or Flattery. The *Truth* is what we profeſs to Believe and Teach: and that needs no baſe or mean Arts to ſupport it; wears no deluding Colours; affects not any Diſguiſe. *By the Manifeſtation of* that *Truth*, *commend I my ſelf to every Man's Conſcience*, *in the Sight of God*. 2 Cor. 4. 2. *I I ſpeak as to wiſe Men: Judge ye what I ſay.*

To conclude, Let us all *conſider how great things God hath done for us*. Let no more ungrateful Murmurings, no more groundleſs *Complaints*, be heard *in our Streets*. But, *laying aſide* all *Hatred*, *Variance*, *Emulations*, *Wrath*, *Strife*, *Seditions*, *Hereſies*, let us unanimouſly *endeavour* to *preſerve the Unity of the Spirit in the Bond of Peace* and Righteouſneſs of Life. Let us conſider, *in this our Day*, *the Things which belong unto our Peace*; the *Peace* of our own *Conſciences*, which the World cannot give, nor recompence the Loſs of; the *Peace* of *this* miſerably Diſtracted *Kingdom*, and of our moſt

1 Sam. 12. 24. Gal. 5. 20. Eph. 4. 3 Luke 19. 42.

moſt Gracious *Sovereign*; the Univerſal Tranquillity and Happineſs of *his Reign*. But ſhou'd *Men* be *Faithleſs*, in *this perverſe Generation*, Pre-
Pſal. 61. 7. *pare* thou, O God, thy *Mercy and Truth, which may preſerve Him*: Preſerve *us* from the *Guilt* and merited *Judgment* of their *Perjury* and *Perfidiouſneſs*; both *our King* and *Us* from the diſmal Conſequences of *Sedition, privy Conſpiracy*, and *Rebellion*, from ſo flagrant, ſo fatal an Evidence of our *Hardneſs of Heart, and Contempt of thy Word and Commandments*.

AND this we beg, through the Merits and Mediation of Jeſus Chriſt our moſt bleſſed Lord and Saviour: To whom with thee, O Father, and the Holy Spirit of Truth, be all Honour and Glory, Dominion and Power, now and for ever.

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